



US008744950B2

(12) **United States Patent
Singer**

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 8,744,950 B2**

(45) **Date of Patent:** ***Jun. 3, 2014**

(54) **METHOD AND INTERFACE FOR
CONSOLIDATING PRICE LEVELS ON A
TRADING SCREEN**

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(*) Notice: Subject to any disclaimer, the term of this
patent is extended or adjusted under 35
U.S.C. 154(b) by 0 days.

This patent is subject to a terminal dis-
claimer.

(21) Appl. No.: **13/850,874**

(22) Filed: **Mar. 26, 2013**

(65) **Prior Publication Data**

US 2013/0275289 A1 Oct. 17, 2013

Related U.S. Application Data

(63) Continuation of application No. 13/454,586, filed on
Apr. 24, 2012, which is a continuation of application
No. 12/907,087, filed on Oct. 19, 2010, now Pat. No.
8,195,554, which is a continuation of application No.
12/502,408, filed on Jul. 14, 2009, now Pat. No.
7,844,532, which is a continuation of application No.
11/415,966, filed on May 2, 2006, now Pat. No.
7,577,607, which is a continuation of application No.
10/304,248, filed on Nov. 26, 2002, now Pat. No.
7,577,602.

(51) **Int. Cl.**
G06Q 40/00 (2012.01)
G06Q 40/06 (2012.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**

CPC **G06Q 40/06** (2013.01)

USPC **705/36 R; 705/35**

(58) **Field of Classification Search**

USPC 705/35-45

See application file for complete search history.

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A trading screen may display price and quantity information
for price levels in a static axis of prices. The static axis of
prices may be divided into two or more different regions. The
price and quantity information for one or more of the regions
may be consolidated from price and quantity information
from plurality of un-consolidated price levels.

12 Claims, 6 Drawing Sheets

Working Orders	Bid Qty	Ask Qty	Price
106	104	102	100
		121	107675
		168	107475
	11		107275
	35		107175
	28		107075
	23		106975
	68		106950
	47		106925
	125		106900
123			106875
67			106850
111			106825
24			106800
40			106750
4			106700
15			106650
12			106600
3			106550

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Trading Window			
Working Orders <u>106</u>	Bid Qty <u>104</u>	Ask Qty <u>102</u>	Price <u>100</u>
		0	107100
		11	107075
		5	107050
		0	107025
		12	107000
		23	106975
		68	106950
		47	106925
		125	106900
	123		106875
	67		106850
	111		106825
	24		106800
	14		106775
	26		106750
	0		106725
	4		106700
	0		106675

FIG. 1

Trading Window

Working Orders 106	Bid Qty 104	Ask Qty 102	Price 100
		15	107225
		12	107175
		23	107125
		16	107075
		12	107025
		23	106975
		68	106950
		47	106925
		125	106900
	123		106875
	67		106850
	111		106825
	24		106800
	40		106750
	4		106700
	15		106650
	12		106600
	3		106550

108

110

112

FIG. 2

Trading Window

Working Orders 106	Bid Qty 104	Ask Qty 102	Price 100
		115	107475
		53	107375
		11	107275
		13	107175
		28	107075
		23	106975
		68	106950
		47	106925
		125	106900
	123		106875
	67		106850
	111		106825
	24		106800
	40		106750
	4		106700
	15		106650
	12		106600
	3		106550

108

110

112

FIG. 3

Trading Window

Working Orders <u>106</u>	Bid Qty <u>104</u>	Ask Qty <u>102</u>	Price <u>100</u>
		115	107550
		53	107450
		11	107350
		13	107250
		28	107150
		23	107050
		68	107000
		47	106950
		125	106900
	123		106850
	67		106800
	111		106750
	24		106700
	44		106500
	27		106300
	15		106100
	7		105900
	33		105700

108

110

112

FIG. 4

Trading Window

Working Orders	Bid Qty	Ask Qty	Price
106	104	102	100
		121	107675
		168	107475
		11	107275
		35	107175
		28	107075
		23	106975
		68	106950
		47	106925
		125	106900
	123		106875
	67		106850
	111		106825
	24		106800
	40		106750
	4		106700
	15		106650
	12		106600
	3		106550

FIG. 5

The figure shows a 'Trading Window' interface. It contains a table with four columns: 'Working Orders' (labeled 106), 'Bid Qty' (labeled 104), 'Ask Qty' (labeled 102), and 'Price' (labeled 100). The table is divided into two sections by a horizontal line. The top section (labeled 110) contains five rows of ask orders. The bottom section (labeled 112) contains ten rows of bid orders. A vertical scrollbar (labeled 116) is located at the bottom of the table. A bracket (labeled 108) groups the entire table area. A bracket (labeled 110) groups the top five rows. A bracket (labeled 112) groups the bottom five rows of the bid section.

Working Orders 106	Bid Qty 104	Ask Qty 102	Price 100
		15	107225
		12	107175
		23	107125
		16	107075
		12	107025
		23	106975
		68	106950
		47	106925
		125	106900
	123		106875
	67		106850
	111		106825
	24		106800
	40		106750
	4		106700
	15		106650
	12		106600
	3		106550

FIG. 6

1

METHOD AND INTERFACE FOR CONSOLIDATING PRICE LEVELS ON A TRADING SCREEN

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 13/454,586, entitled "Method and Interface for Consolidating Price Levels on a Trading Screen," filed Apr. 24, 2012, now U.S. Pat. No. 8,429,062, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/907,087 filed Oct. 19, 2010, now U.S. Pat. No. 8,195,554, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 12/502,408, filed Jul. 14, 2009, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,844,532, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 11/415,966 filed May 2, 2006, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,577,607, which is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/304,248 filed Nov. 26, 2002, now U.S. Pat. No. 7,577,602, the contents of which are fully incorporated herein by reference.

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to electronic trading. More specifically, it relates to a method for displaying trading information.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Many exchanges throughout the world now support electronic trading. Generally, an electronic exchange provides a matching process between traders, or simply buyers and sellers. Some well known exchanges include Eurex, London International Financial Futures Exchange ("LIFFE"), Euronext, Chicago Mercantile Exchange ("CME"), Chicago Board of Trade ("CBOT"), Xetra, and Island. Traders are typically connected to an electronic exchange by way of a communication link to facilitate electronic messaging between the trader and the exchange.

For instance, the trader might submit buy or sell orders to an electronic exchange and later obtain status or fill information from the exchange. Among other things, ease of submitting buy or sell orders has made electronic exchanges a successful venue for trading. Accordingly, an increasing number of people across the world are actively participating in a market at any given time. The increase in the number of potential market participants has advantageously led to, among other things, a more competitive market and greater liquidity.

A trader can connect to an exchange, for example, using a client device, and the exchange can serve as a host. Once connected, software running on the client allows the trader to log onto one or more exchanges and participate in one or more markets. Some clients run software that creates specialized interactive trading screens. In general, the trading screens enable traders to enter orders into the market, obtain market quotes, and monitor positions. The range and quality of features available varies according to the specific trading application.

One such feature generally displayed by a trading screen is the current market depth, which includes a number of price levels and the outstanding bid or ask quantities corresponding to the price levels. While the market may include outstanding bid and ask quantities at a multitude of different price levels, the trading screen may not be physically large enough to accommodate displaying all of the different price levels and

2

their outstanding bid or ask quantities. Thus, a trading screen typically displays a range of price levels around the inside market.

Displaying a small range of price levels around the inside market, however, may provide a trader with a narrow view of the market. The trader may view the market depth around the inside market, but the trader may not be able to see the outstanding market depth at price levels further away from the inside market. This problem may be accentuated depending on the "tick" size used by the market or the client software. A tick generally refers to the smallest tradeable price level graduation in the market.

A market may use any measure for a tick. For example, a tick may represent a fraction of a dollar or another currency, or a tick may represent a decimal portion of a dollar or another currency. When displaying smaller ticks, the trading screen displays an increasingly narrow view of the current market. For example, using a graduation of one cent, a trader may only be able to see price levels a few cents away from the inside market. The market, however, may have bids and asks outstanding over a range of several dollars away from the inside market, but the trader may not be able to see these other outstanding bids and asks due to the narrow range of price levels within the viewable area of the trading screen.

In the following detailed description, a trading application and trading interface for displaying consolidated price and quantity information are described. These tools provide advantages, as described below, to a trader in an electronic trading environment.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The presently preferred embodiments of the present invention are described herein with reference to the drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 is a trading screen configurable for two or more display regions in which at least one of the display regions uses consolidation;

FIG. 2 is a preferred embodiment of the trading screen of FIG. 1 configured for three display regions in which two of the display regions use consolidation with the same consolidation scale;

FIG. 3 is a preferred embodiment of the trading screen of FIG. 1 configured for three display regions in which two of the display regions use consolidation with different consolidation scales;

FIG. 4 is a preferred embodiment of the trading screen of FIG. 1 configured for three display regions in which each of the display regions use consolidation and in which each of the display regions uses a different consolidation scale;

FIG. 5 is a preferred embodiment of the trading screen of FIG. 1 configured for four display regions in which three of the display regions use consolidation; and

FIG. 6 is a preferred embodiment of the trading screen of FIG. 2 configured with a single adjustable feature for changing the consolidation scale of the display regions.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PRESENTLY PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Many different exchanges support electronic trading. Electronic trading allows a trader to interact with the exchanges from a remote location, such as by using a computer connected to the exchanges over one or more computer networks. Once connected to an exchange, the trader may receive market information about tradeable objects that are traded on the

exchange. The trader may additionally trade the tradeable objects, such as by entering buy or sell orders.

A tradeable object can be any object, such as stocks, options, bonds, futures, currency, warrants, funds, or other financial objects. Other objects, for example, grains, energy and metals can also be traded. Of course, these lists are not exhaustive, and any other object for which there exists a market can be traded. Tradeable objects can be "real," such as products that are listed by an exchange for trading, or they can be "synthetic," such as a combination of real products that is created by a trader, firm, broker or the like. Of course, a tradeable object could actually be a combination of other tradeable objects, such as a class of tradeable objects.

Electronic trading exchanges are generally based on one or more hosts, one or more computer networks, and a plurality of clients. In general, the host includes one or more centralized computers. Its operations may include order matching, maintaining order books and positions, price information, and managing and updating, for example a database, that records such information. The host may also be equipped with an external interface that maintains uninterrupted contact to the clients and possibly other trading-related systems.

Market participants may link to the host through one or more networks. A network is a group of two or more computers linked together. There are many types of networks such as local area networks and wide area networks. Networks can also be characterized by topology, protocol, and architecture. However, any type of network configuration can be used in electronic trading. For example, some market participants may link to the host through a direct connection such as a T1 line or an Integrated Digital Services Network ("ISDN") connection. When connecting through a direct connection, a market participant may connect through one or more common network components such as high-speed servers, routers, and gateways, and so on. Of course, a market participant may also connect to the exchange through the Internet or another type of network.

A method, system and interface for electronic trading with an exchange is described in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/590,692, filed Jun. 9, 2000, entitled "Click Based Trading with Intuitive Grid Display of Market Depth." This application is commonly assigned to Trading Technologies International, Inc., and it is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. This application describes network topologies, interfaces and general trading functionality and techniques that may be used in implementing the preferred embodiments described herein.

Once connected to an exchange, a trading application may use trading screens to enable a trader to interact with one or more markets. Trading screens may enable traders to enter and cancel orders, obtain market information, and monitor positions while implementing various trading strategies including those previously used on the floor of an exchange. For example, using the trading screen a trader may receive information about tradeable objects traded on the exchange. Additionally, the trader may use the trading screen, for example, to place buy and sell orders for the tradeable objects or to otherwise trade the tradeable objects.

The trading application may receive information from the exchange, which can in turn be displayed to the trader. For example, the trading application may receive a list of tradeable objects traded on the exchange. Additionally, the trading application may receive market information for each tradeable object, such as bid prices, bid quantities, ask prices, ask quantities, and additionally, some exchanges provide prices and quantities for past sales, and other market related information. The information may be continuously or regularly

provided to the trading application, which allows the trading application to update the trading screen with current market information.

Using the information provided by the exchange, the trading screen may display a range of price levels and corresponding bid and ask quantities for the price levels in regard to tradeable objects. Oftentimes, however, the physical display size of the trading screen is limited, and the trading screen is unable to display all the different price levels and their corresponding bid or ask quantities. In order to provide the trader with pertinent trading information, the trading screen may display a range of prices around the inside market. The trading screen may also display the bid and ask quantities corresponding to these price levels.

The market, however, may have a number of other price levels with outstanding bid or ask quantities that are not displayed in the range around the inside market. As these price levels and quantities are not displayed, the trader cannot view this information. Thus, the trader may only view a narrow range of price levels and corresponding quantities around the inside market but not see trading information displayed at price levels further away from the inside market. This problem may be further accentuated based on the tick size for the market. As the tick size decreases, the trader sees an increasingly narrow view of the market. Also, as the tick size decreases, the trader may be more willing to trade at price levels further away from the inside market, because the change in price levels may then only correspond to a small change in the actual price of the tradeable object. Thus, it may be advantageous for the trader to view the market depth at price levels further away from the inside market.

One way to enhance a trading screen's display of the current market depth is through price consolidation. One such trading screen that implements price consolidation is described in U.S. patent application Ser. No. 09/971,087, entitled "Click Based Trading With Intuitive Grid Display of Market Depth and Price Consolidation," filed on Oct. 5, 2001. This application is commonly assigned to Trading Technologies International, Inc., and it is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety.

In price consolidation, two or more price levels may be combined into a single "consolidated" price level. The outstanding bid or ask quantity of the consolidated price level may then be the sum of the outstanding quantities of the un-consolidated price levels combined to form the consolidated price level. Using price consolidation, a trading screen may then display information from a greater number of price levels on the trading screen than it would be able to if it did not use price consolidation. The methods and displays described in "Click Based Trading With Intuitive Grid Display of Market Depth and Price Consolidation" allow a trader to advantageously use price consolidation to view outstanding quantities over a greater range of price levels.

"Click Based Trading With Intuitive Grid Display of Market Depth and Price Consolidation" describes a method of price consolidation where the number of un-consolidated price levels combined to form a consolidated price level may vary, but each price level is formed from the same number of un-consolidated price levels as the other consolidated price levels. For example, if each consolidated price level were formed from two un-consolidated price levels, the trading screen would be able to display information for twice the number of price levels as a trading screen that did not use price consolidation.

That application also describes example equations that can be used in consolidating price levels. In addition to the equa-

tions described in that application, the following definitions and equations, which provide improved handling of negative prices, can also be used:

P=Price (in ticks)

N=Variable increment chosen by the trader (number of ticks per consolidated price)

Bcp=Consolidated price row with corresponding bid quantity (in ticks)

Acp=Consolidated price row with corresponding ask quantity (in ticks)

Floor=Floor function

Os=Offset (# ticks)

$$Bcp = \text{Floor}((P - Os)/N)N + Os$$

$$Acp = \text{Floor}(((P - Os) + N - 1)/N)N + Os$$

As the trader may want to place orders at the price levels close to the inside market, it may be important to the trader to have a higher resolution closer to the inside market or even to view un-consolidated quantities near the inside market. Additionally, the trader may want to place orders closer to the inside market by using an increased consolidation price level resolution or even to place orders by specifying specific un-consolidated price levels. At the same time, the trader may want to use price consolidation to view information at price levels further away from the inside market than could be displayed on a trading screen that didn't use price consolidation.

While the "Click Based Trading With Intuitive Grid Display of Market Depth and Price Consolidation" application describes a method for advantageously applying price consolidation to all the price levels of a trading screen, it would be still more advantageous to provide the trader with a method of price consolidation that allows the trader to have a high resolution near the inside market (or other arbitrarily define area) while still using price consolidation to view a greater number of price levels on the trading screen, such as those further away from the inside market. One way to allow the trader to increase the resolution closer to the inside market while still using price consolidation to view information for price levels further away from the inside market is to use a trading screen having two or more display regions using different consolidation resolutions.

FIG. 1 is a trading screen configurable for two or more display regions in which at least one of the display regions uses consolidation. The trading screen of FIG. 1 may be used, for example, to increase the resolution at an area surrounding the inside market, while still using price consolidation to allow the trader to view information from price levels further away from the inside market.

As shown in FIG. 1, the trading screen includes a price column 100, which may be used to display a range of price levels for a tradeable object. As depicted in FIG. 1, each of the price levels displayed in the price column 100 corresponds to one tick. Thus, the price levels shown in FIG. 1 are un-consolidated, and they represent the smallest graduation of price levels tradeable in the market.

The trading screen also includes an ask quantity column 102 and a bid quantity column 104. The ask quantity column 102 displays current ask quantities at various different price levels. The bid quantity column 104 displays current bid quantities at various different price levels. Thus, the ask quantity column 102 and the bid quantity column 104 display the current market depth. The bid and ask quantities in the bid and ask quantity columns 102, 104 may be displayed using any type of indicator. For example, the indicator may be graphical representation of quantity (e.g., colors, bars, etc. . . .), or the

indicator may be a textual representation of quantity, such as a number. Various combinations of indicators may also be used, for example, a text representation in combination with a color.

As depicted in FIG. 1, the outstanding bid quantities and ask quantities are displayed in association with price levels arranged along a common static axis or scale of prices. The price levels are fixed in relation to the bid and ask quantity columns 102, 104, such that the indicators in these columns 102, 104 may move relative to the static axis of prices. For example, the bid and ask quantities displayed by the trading screen may change, and the inside market may move away from the price level depicted in FIG. 1. While the trading application may update the quantities, and while the position of the inside market may change, the range of price levels displayed in the price column 100 and the respective positions of the price levels displayed in the price column 100 may remain fixed.

It should be noted that the static axis of prices is not necessarily immovable with respect its physical position on the display screen, but rather may be moved to various different positions on the display. The user may use a mouse or other input device, for example, to reposition static axis of prices to a different location on the display screen, such as by dragging the static axis of prices from one side of the display screen to the other side of the display screen. In another example, the user may vary which portion of the static axis of prices is displayed, such as by scrolling up or down the axis or by entering a repositioning command.

One commercially available trading application that allows a user to trade in an electronic trading environment, and which may be used in the preferred embodiments, is X_TRADER® from Trading Technologies International, Inc. of Chicago, Ill. X_TRADER® also provides an electronic trading interface, referred to as MD Trader™, in which working orders and/or bid and ask quantities are displayed in association with a static price axis or scale. It should be understood, however, that the preferred embodiments are not limited to any particular display, such as X_TRADER® or MD Trader™-style displays, but may be used with a variety of different display types.

Portions of the X_TRADER® and the MD Trader™-style display are described in the previously referenced applications. Moreover, the trading application may implement tools for trading tradeable objects that are described in a U.S. patent application Ser. No. 10/125,894, titled "Trading Tools for Electronic Trading," and filed Apr. 19, 2002. This application is commonly assigned to Trading Technologies International, Inc., and it is incorporated by reference herein in its entirety.

The trading screen may also include a variety of other columns, which may be used to display other information to a trader. For example, as depicted in FIG. 1, the trading screen includes a working orders column 106 that may be used to display orders placed by a trader at a price level that have not yet been matched in the market. The working order column 106 is merely one example, and many other columns may be displayed in addition to the working order column 106 or in place of the working order column 106.

Other changes may also be made. In a preferred embodiment, as shown in FIG. 1, the trading screen displays a static price column 100 and the ask and bid quantities are displayed with respect to the static axis of prices. In an alternate embodiment, the ask and bid quantities may be displayed with respect to a static axis of prices, but the price column 100 is not actually displayed. In yet another alternate embodiment, the price column 100 may be dynamically displayed so that the inside market remains centered at a position in the trading

screen's display. In another alternate embodiment, one or both of the quantities columns **102**, **104** may be omitted from the display.

Additionally, the orientation of the trading screen may be altered. For example, while FIG. 1 depicts the columns **100**, **102**, **104**, **106** in a vertical orientation, they may alternatively be arranged in a horizontal orientation. In yet another alternate embodiment, the columns **100**, **102**, **104**, **106** may be arranged in an oblique orientation or using another type of display format. In yet another alternate embodiment, the order of the columns **100**, **102**, **104**, **106** may be rearranged. In another alternate embodiment, two or more of the columns **100**, **102**, **104**, **106** may overlap.

The trading screen of FIG. 1 may be configured to display two or more different display regions, which may be sub-regions of the price column **100**. The display regions may be used to display the un-consolidated price levels of FIG. 1, or they may display consolidated price levels formed by combining two or more of the un-consolidated price levels of FIG. 1. In a preferred embodiment, at least one of the display regions displays un-consolidated price levels, while one or more other display regions display consolidated price levels. In another preferred embodiment, all of the display regions display consolidated price levels, and the display regions may use different consolidation scales.

FIG. 2 is a preferred embodiment of the trading screen of FIG. 1 configured for three display regions in which two of the display regions use consolidation with the same consolidation scale. As shown, a first display region **108** is centered with respect to the range of price levels displayed in the price column **100**. The first display region **108**, however, is not confined to being centered with respect to the price column **100**. It may be offset from the center of the price level range, it may be offset from the inside market, or it may not include the inside market at all. As depicted in FIG. 1, the first display region **108** includes the inside market, and the trading screen does not coalesce price levels in the first display region **108**. This allows the trader to view the price levels near the inside market with the greatest precision. In alternate embodiments, and as will be described later, the first display region **108** may also consolidate price levels.

The trading screen of FIG. 2 further includes a second display region **110** and a third display region **112**. As shown in FIG. 2, the second display region **110** is generally located above the first display region **108**, and the third display region **112** is generally located below the first display region **108**. It should be understood, however, that the described locations of the first, second and third display regions **108**, **110**, **112** are merely arbitrary in nature, and their respective locations on a trading screen may be varied.

The second and third display regions **110**, **112** may each respectively include consolidated price levels, which may be formed by combining two or more adjacent price levels into a single price level. As shown in FIG. 2, the consolidated price levels in the second and third display regions **110**, **112** are each formed by consolidating two of the price levels in the trading screen of in FIG. 1. The price levels in the second and third display regions **110**, **112**, however, may be formed by consolidating more than two price levels, thereby changing the scale of the second or third display regions **110**, **112**. By consolidating price levels in the second and third display regions **110**, **112**, the trading screen may display information from more un-consolidated price levels while still displaying the same number of physical price levels on the trading screen. This may advantageously allow a trader to view market information for price levels further away from the inside

market. Various changes, such as the number of regions or their consolidation scales, may also be made.

FIG. 3 is a preferred embodiment of the trading screen of FIG. 1 configured for three display regions in which two of the display regions use consolidation with different consolidation scales. The trading screen depicted in FIG. 3 includes the first display region **108**, the second display region **110**, and the third display region **112**. In this embodiment, the second and third display regions **110**, **112** are each formed by consolidating a different number of price levels. The price levels in the second display region **110** are formed by combining four price levels into a single consolidated price level, and the price levels in the third display region **112** are formed by combining two price levels into a single consolidated price level.

By using different scales in the second and third display regions **110**, **112**, the trader may be able to see different ranges of price levels above and below those displayed in the first display region **108**. As the second display region **112** consolidates more price levels than the third display region **110**, the trader is able to see information formed from more un-consolidated price levels above the first display region **108** than below the first display region **108**. The range of un-consolidated price levels combined into the second and third display regions **110**, **112** may be varied based on the scale used by the second and third display regions **110**, **112**. Combining four and two rows respectively for the second and third display regions **110**, **112** is merely an example, and other scales may be used as well.

FIG. 4 is a preferred embodiment of the trading screen of FIG. 1 configured for three display regions in which each of the display regions uses consolidation and in which each of the display regions uses a different consolidation scale. FIG. 4 also depicts the first display region **108**, the second display region **110** and the third display region **112**. As shown in FIG. 4, each of the first, second and third display regions **108**, **110**, **112** combine two or more price levels to form consolidated price levels, which are then displayed in their respective display regions.

Thus, in this display, the price levels in the first display region **108** around the inside market are consolidated price levels formed by combining two of the price levels shown in FIG. 1. However, consolidating two price levels is merely an example, and any number of price levels may be combined to form the consolidated price levels in the first display region **108**. The second and third display regions **110**, **112** each include consolidated price levels. The second display region **110** is formed by combining four price levels, while the third display region **112** is formed by combining eight price levels. In alternate embodiments, the number of un-consolidated price levels combined to form the consolidated price levels may be the different for the second and third display regions **110**, **112**, or the second or third display regions **110**, **112** may not use consolidation at all.

FIG. 5 is a preferred embodiment of the trading screen of FIG. 1 configured for four display regions in which three of the display regions use consolidation. FIG. 5 depicts the first, second and third display regions **108**, **110**, **112**, and in addition to these regions it also displays a fourth display region **114**. The fourth display region **114** displayed in FIG. 5 is located above the second display region **110**, but it should be understood that the fourth display region **114** may be located at any position on the trading screen. The fourth display region **114** may be configured, for example, to have a different scale than the second display region, thereby differentiating the fourth display region **114** from the adjacent second display region **110**.

In a preferred embodiment, as shown in FIG. 5, the fourth display region 114 may use a larger scale than the second display region, thereby allowing the trading screen to display information for even a greater number of price levels away from the inside market. Thus, the resolution of the price levels may decrease further away from the inside market. For example, the first display region 108 may have the greatest resolution by not consolidating any price levels or by combining only a small number of price levels into each consolidated price level. The resolution may then decrease in the second display region 110, which may combine a greater number of price levels than was used by the first display region 108 to form the consolidated price levels. The fourth display region 114 may then also combine a greater number of price levels to form its consolidated rows that was used by the second display region 110, thereby giving the fourth display region 114 a lower resolution than the second display region 110. It is not necessary, however, that the consolidation resolution decrease away from the inside market. Rather, any combination of arbitrary consolidation resolutions, or no consolidation at all, may be used for the different display regions 108, 110, 112, 114.

The display regions 108, 110, 112, 114, in the various trading screen embodiments may be configured by a user. For example, the trading application may be preprogrammed with a default configuration, which may be used when the trading application initially displays the trading screen. The default configuration may also be changed by the user. Once the trading screen is displayed to the user, the user may further reconfigure the trading screen, such as by adding or removing display regions or by changing various properties of one or more of the display regions 108, 110, 112, 114.

The user may add or remove display regions in a variety of different ways. In one embodiment, the trading screen may display one or more configuration screens in which the user may manually enter information to configure the number and location of the display regions. For example, the user may enter a number of regions to be displayed on the trading screen, and the user may further enter beginning and ending price levels for the display regions. The ranges specified by the user may be static and thus not change based on the movement of the inside market, or alternatively the ranges specified by the user may dynamically change based on the movement of the inside market. The trader may also use the configuration screens to remove one or more of the display regions.

In another embodiment, the user may configure the number and location of the display regions directly from the trading screen. For example, the user may select a beginning price level and ending price level for a display region. This may be done, for instance, using a mouse or other input device. Using the input device, the trader may select a beginning price level for the display region, such as by clicking a mouse button on the beginning price level in combination with one or more other keys. The trader may then also select an ending price level for the display region, such as by clicking a mouse button on the ending price level in combination with one or more other keys. Once the user makes the selection of the beginning and ending price levels, the trading application may responsively create and display the display region. The trader may similarly remove a display region, such as by clicking on a point within the display region in combination with one or more other keys.

In another embodiment, the trader may configure a display region by using an input device to highlight one or more price levels. For example, the trader may use the input device to click on a beginning price level, perhaps also in combination

with one or more other keys, and then drag the input device to an ending price level. Once the trader has selected the price levels in the manner, the trading application may responsively create a display region in the area selected by the user. These methods of creating a display region are merely examples, and many other ways of selecting a range of price levels to create a display region also exist.

Once the user has created a display region, the user may configure various properties for the display region. For example, the user may specify whether the display region remains fixed with respect to a particular range of prices or whether the display region may dynamically change price levels, such as in response to a change in position of the inside market. In another example, the regions may be color-coded, such as by using different colors to correspond to the different consolidation scales used by the various display regions. The user may select the colors corresponding to the different display regions directly, or the user may associate different colors with different scales that are then used automatically by the trading application depending on the chosen scale for the display regions.

In another example, the user may configure the scale of the display region, such as by specifying a number of un-consolidated price levels to be combined into consolidated price levels for the display region. Alternatively, the user may select the scale such that no price levels are combined to form a consolidated price level in the display region.

The user may adjust the scale of a display region in a variety of different ways. In one embodiment, as previously described, the user may use a configuration screen to enter information for the display region, such as the scale of the display region. In a preferred embodiment, the trading screen displays one or more adjustable features, which may be used to set the scale of a display region. The adjustable features may take many different forms. For example, an adjustable feature may be text box, in which the user may type a scale for the display region. For instance, by entering "2" into the text box, the user may specify that two un-consolidated price levels should be combined to form a single consolidated price level. The text box may include selection arrows, such as can be selected using an input device in order to adjust the value displayed in the text box up or down without requiring the user to manually type a value into the text box.

In another example, an adjustable feature may be a slideable bar. Once such implementation of a slideable bar used for price consolidation is described in the "Trading Tools for Electronic Trading" application. The slideable bar may be adjusted between two endpoints, such as by using a mouse or other input device. The position of the slideable bar may then determine the scale used for a display region. For example, one endpoint may correspond to a first scale for the display region, and the second endpoint may correspond to a second scale for the scale region. Intermediate points between the first and second endpoints may then correspond to scales between the first and second scale. While the scales corresponding to the endpoints, as well as the number of intermediate points between the endpoints, may be set to a default values, these parameters may also be adjust by the user, for example, through a configuration screen.

In one preferred embodiment, the trading screen displays a separate adjustable feature for each display region. This may allow a user to easily adjust the scale of any of the display regions on the trading screen without having to enter a separate configuration screen. In another preferred embodiment, the trading screen displays a single adjustable feature for corresponding to one or more of the display regions.

11

FIG. 6 is a preferred embodiment of the trading screen of FIG. 2 configured with a single adjustable feature for changing the consolidation scale of the display regions. The trading screen depicted in FIG. 6 includes an adjustable feature 116, which may be used to change the scale of the display regions 108, 110, 112. Thus, the user may use the adjustable feature 116 to alter the number of price levels that are combined in order to form a consolidated price level in a particular display region 108, 110, 112. The user may select a display region 108, 110, 112, such as by clicking on the display region 108, 110, 112 in combination with one or more other keys. The user may then adjust the scale of the display region using the adjustable feature 116. After selecting another display region 108, 110, 112, the user may then use the same adjustable feature 116 to adjust the scale of the other display regions. In another embodiment, the adjustable feature 116 may be used to simultaneously adjust the scale of more than one display region, such as by making a proportional change in scale to each of the display regions in response to an adjustment of the adjustable feature 116.

In addition to configuring appearance of the display regions 108, 110, 112, the user may additionally configure trading options for the display regions 108, 110, 112. The user may, for example, place trades directly from the display screen, such as by using a mouse or other input device to select a cell in the ask quantity column 102 or the bid quantity column 104. The user may additionally specify a quantity, or the user may have pre-specified a default quantity for order placed from the trading screen. When using a default quantity, the trading application may automatically submit the user's order upon selecting one of the cells in the ask or bid quantity columns 102, 104, or alternatively, the trading application may wait for the user to take an additional action. The order may then be submitted at the price corresponding to the selected cell.

The selected cell, however, may correspond to a consolidated price level. So, an order placed at a consolidated price level may in fact be placed at one or more of the price levels that are combined to form the consolidated price level. Thus, the user may also configure how the trading application handles orders at consolidated price levels, such as by specifying at which of the non-consolidated price levels an order is submitted. Various different methods may be used to handle orders at consolidated price levels. For example, the trading application may submit a limit order at the consolidated price level, or the trading application may submit a limit order at one of the other un-consolidated price levels making-up the consolidated price level. In another example, the order quantity may be split among one or more of the un-consolidated price levels making-up the consolidated price level, such as in an equal distribution or in any other possible combination. The distribution among these price levels may be, for example, specified by the user.

In another embodiment for placing orders, the trader may select a consolidated price level, such as by clicking on the price or quantity information for the consolidated price level. Instead of automatically placing a trade using one of the previously described methods, the trading screen may open another window showing the un-consolidated price and quantities corresponding to the selected consolidated price level. Trader may then, for example, click in the quantity fields for one or more of the un-consolidated price levels in order to place orders in the normal fashion. The trader may then close the window after placing a trader, or they window may close automatically after the trader places a trade.

It should be understood that the programs, processes, methods and apparatus described herein are not related or

12

limited to any particular type of computer or network apparatus (hardware or software), unless indicated otherwise. Various types of general purpose or specialized computer apparatus may be used with or perform operations in accordance with the teachings described herein. While various elements of the preferred embodiments have been described as being implemented in software, in other embodiments hardware or firmware implementations may alternatively be used, and vice-versa.

In view of the wide variety of embodiments to which the principles of the present invention can be applied, it should be understood that the illustrated embodiments are exemplary only, and should not be taken as limiting the scope of the present invention. For example, the steps of the flow diagrams may be taken in sequences other than those described, and more, fewer or other elements may be used in the block diagrams.

The claims should not be read as limited to the described order or elements unless stated to that effect. In addition, use of the term "means" in any claim is intended to invoke 35 U.S.C. §112, paragraph 6, and any claim without the word "means" is not so intended. Therefore, all embodiments that come within the scope and spirit of the following claims and equivalents thereto are claimed as the invention.

I claim:

1. A system including:

a computing device,

wherein the computing device is configured to generate a first consolidated price level, wherein the first consolidated price level represents a first range of price levels for a tradeable object, wherein the first range of price levels includes a first number of price levels;

wherein the computing device is configured to generate a first consolidated quantity indicator, wherein the first consolidated quantity indicator is based on a plurality of quantities at the price levels in the first range of price levels;

wherein the computing device is configured to generate a second consolidated price level, wherein the second consolidated price level represents a second range of price levels for the tradeable object, wherein the second range of price levels includes a second number of price levels, wherein the first number of price levels and the second number of price levels are different;

wherein the computing device is configured to generate a second consolidated quantity indicator, wherein the second consolidated quantity indicator is based on a plurality of quantities at the price levels in the second range of price levels;

wherein the computing device is configured to display the first consolidated quantity indicator in association with the first consolidated price level on a price axis for the tradeable object, wherein the first consolidated price level is displayed on the price axis in place of the first range of price levels; and

wherein the computing device is configured to display the second consolidated quantity indicator in association with the second consolidated price level on the price axis for the tradeable object, wherein the second consolidated price level is displayed on the price axis in place of the second range of price levels.

2. The system of claim 1, wherein the first number of price levels is configurable by a user, wherein the second number of price levels is configurable by the user.

3. The system of claim 1, wherein the first range of price levels includes at least one of a best bid price and a best ask price for the tradeable object.

13

4. The system of claim 1, wherein the first range of price levels is adjacent to the second range of price levels.

5. The system of claim 1, wherein the first range of price levels corresponds to price levels on a buy side for the tradeable object, wherein the second range of price levels corresponds to price levels on a sell side for the tradeable object. 5

6. The system of claim 1, wherein the first range of price levels and the second range of price levels change dynamically based on changes in at least one of a best bid price and a best ask price for the tradeable object. 10

7. The system of claim 1, wherein the price axis represents a static price axis.

8. The system of claim 1, wherein the price axis represents a dynamic price axis. 15

9. The system of claim 1, wherein the price axis represents a column of price levels.

10. The system of claim 1, wherein the computing device is configured to generate a first unconsolidated quantity indicator, wherein the first

14

unconsolidated quantity indicator is based on a quantity at a first unconsolidated price level; and wherein the computing device is configured to display the first unconsolidated quantity indicator in association with the first unconsolidated price level on the price axis for the tradeable object.

11. The system of claim 10, wherein the first unconsolidated price level is one of a best bid price and a best ask price for the tradeable object.

12. The system of claim 1, wherein the computing device is configured to generate a first consolidated working order indicator, wherein the first consolidated working order indicator is based on a one or more working orders at the price levels in the first range of price levels; and

wherein the computing device is configured to display the first consolidated working order indicator in association with the first consolidated price level on the price axis for the tradeable object.

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